

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11 are presented for consideration, with claims 2, 3, 8, and 9 being independent.

Claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 12-22 have been cancelled herein without prejudice or disclaimer.

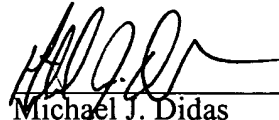
Applicants note that claims 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, and 11 have been allowed.

The Office Action entered rejections of claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 12-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,749,024 (Young) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,104,498 (Shima et al.) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,442,732 (Matysek et al.). As noted above, however, claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 12-22 have been cancelled herein. The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice to or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejection, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance and to expedite issuance.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. Didas", is written over a horizontal line.

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